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A
LETTER
TO A

FRIEND,

Concerning his forsaking

The Ways of Religion



UPON
WORLDLY MOTIVES.

*What will it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose
his own Soul?*

L O N D O N :

Printed for M. FOLINGSBY, at the *Seven Stars*,
near *Temple-Bar*.

MDCCLXIV.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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The Religion



WORLDLY MOTIVES.

It is not until it is put to the test, that the world's motives are seen.

LONDON:

Printed for M. Bellingham, at the Green Swan,

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Price 2s. 6d.

A
L E T T E R

T O A
F R I E N D, &c.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE Intimacy which has for some time subsisted between us gives me a Right, I presume, to the Liberty of writing the following Lines; in which if I seem to use any uncommon Freedom, I hope the Importance of the Occasion, and the Necessity of your being admonished, will effectually plead my Excuse, and obtain your Pardon.

I apprehend, from what I have learnt from your refined Notions and Maxims of true Friendship, that it is the essential Part thereof, for Friends to have as anxious and solicitous a Concern for each other's Interest and Welfare, as for their own: And that a wilful Neglect in either Party to embrace any Opportunity that might offer of securing or promoting them, may justly be

deemed a Breach of Friendship. Hence I am persuaded I should no longer deserve the Name of *Friend*, if I either saw an Enemy aiming at your precious Life, and did not inform you of it, that you might be upon your guard; or discovered any Imprudence or Misconduct you was guilty of in managing your Affairs in Life, which tended greatly to your Disadvantage, and if continued, was likely to end in your Ruin, and did not acquaint you therewith, and give you my friendly Advice thereon, that, your Conduct being altered, an Alteration in your Affairs might also take place, and those (otherwise necessary) Consequences be prevented. If seeing you in such Circumstances I with-held my Advice, and remained silent, (although your candid, generous Disposition might induce you to forgive me) every one that knew it would condemn me for it, and pronounce me, if not intentionally, yet, in effect, your Enemy, and in some Respect accessary to any Trouble or Distress that should ensue.

Now if it be acting an Enemy's Part, to withhold Advice when we see a Friend acting wrong in temporal Affairs, and if such Conduct deserves universal Censure, how much more inexcusable must the like Conduct be in Affairs of an eternal Nature; whereby the loss—not of Money, Goods, or an Estate is likely to ensue—but the Loss and eternal Ruin of an immortal Soul? Now be not surpris'd, Sir, if I take upon me to act the true Friend, and tell you plainly that in Circumstances of the latter Kind I apprehend

you

you now to be. It is but too, too evident to all around you, that you are extremely negligent of the Welfare, and that your present Conduct greatly endangers the Loss of your precious Soul. And surely not to admonish you thereof would be very unfriendly, if not highly criminal in *me*. Suffer me, therefore, I intreat you, as one who has your Interest and Welfare much at Heart, and as your present Circumstances call aloud on me for this Act of Friendship; suffer me, without Offence, to expostulate with you, and to endeavour to convince you of the FOLLY, the INGRATITUDE, PRESUMPTION, and DANGER of your present Conduct, and to persuade you, in the Spirit of Love and of Meekness, to return to that God from whom you are wandering very fast.

How are you fallen! my unhappy Brother, from that shining Profession of Faith, and Love of the Gospel which you once manifested! How strangely started aside and gone back!—Whither, O whither will you run!—Listen to the friendly Voice that cries after you!—Stop, stop, my Brother—Stop, I beseech you, and consider a Moment, whither those Paths lead in which you are now walking. Know you not they lead down to Death?—Perceive you not you are running with the Multitude in the broad Way to Destruction? And that, if you continue therein, your End will be inevitably like theirs.

O how different was your Conduct once!—When I reflect *how often we have taken sweet*

Counsel together about the Things of God, till our Hearts have burnt within us, and have walked to the House of God as dear Friends ; when I call to mind the many warm Expressions of Love and Gratitude to the dear Redeemer, that I have heard flow from your Lips ; and the Zeal you once shewed to bring others acquainted with this precious Redeemer and Friend of Sinners, to make his Name savoury, and to be highly esteemed by all ; when these Reflections occupy my Mind, (as they often do) you cannot conceive what inexpressible Grief it occasions. Indeed, Sir, it makes my Heart bleed to see how you have turned your Back upon our adorable Redeemer, and that you seem to neglect, if not despise his great Salvation ; and that the Things, the perishing Things of this World engross all your Thoughts and Care. Time was you seemed to run well, and to bid fair for the Kingdom of Heaven ; but now your Course is altered ; and in your Practice you are highly dishonouring God, stumbling other Professors, and accelerating, as much as in you lies, the Ruin of your own Soul. Converse now about the Things of God seems tasteless to you ; the Name of Christ unfavoury ; and you often discover such a Spirit for the trifling vain Amusements and Diversions of the Age, as plainly indicates that the World (not God) at present occupies your Heart. And although you have not totally forsaken all Ordinances and Means of Grace,

yet

yet you shew such Remifsness and Reluctance in your Attendance on them, and such Irregularity in your Conduct in general ; that reflecting on what a Change has taken place, I might (with great Propriety) address you, and say,—*How art thou fallen, O thou shining Professor !*

Does a Spirit of Resentment begin to rise in my Friend, and is he ready to condemn me for such severe, uncharitable Accusations ?—If I use the Probe so as to make you feel, it is only in order to your healing. Love guides my Hand, and if I make you smart, believe me, I partake of the Pain. But I know you are too ingenuous, on cool Reflection, to deny the Charge, how severe soever it may seem to come from a Friend. Therefore let me intreat you to use the Candour you possess, and repress any Risings of Resentment you may feel at the reading this : And,

Consider, dear Sir, I beseech you the FOLLY of your present Conduct. What could blind your Understanding, and bias your Judgment so much, as to induce you to make such an unwise Choice ? What could prompt you *to forsake the Fountain of living Waters*, and to seek Happiness in *the broken Cisterns* of the Things of this World ? After you had made Trial of the Insufficiency thereof, and in some Measure experienced (at least was persuaded to believe, and by your Profession to declare) that all true Happiness, both present and future, was to be found in Jesus Christ alone. What has he done

to you that you should use him so ungratefully ? Do you discover any such Beauty or Excellency in any of the Creatures, that they are worthy to be put in Competition with, or to be preferred before him, the almighty Creator, and gracious Saviour ? Have you not often experienced the Vanity and Emptiness, the Uncertainty and Unsatisfactoriness of all created Things ? What is there to be found beneath the Sun, but has a Voice that cries in Wisdom's Ear ?——“ Happiness is not in us, O ye fond Pursuers ! we are all empty Cisterns of ourselves : Whatever Beauty, Good, or Excellency we possess, it is all transmitted to us from that inexhaustible Fountain of Perfection, of Goodness, and Life, from whence we derived our Existence, and by the Word of whose Power we still subsist. Yea, we are all perishing and vanishing Things, we appear but for a Moment, and then cease to be.”——

And can any of those Things you are so fondly pursuing, the Riches, the Honours, or Pleasures of the World, afford you that Happiness which you want ? Can either or all of these bring Peace, procure Joy, or obtain Salvation for your Soul ? Can these deliver from the Wrath to come, and put you in Possession of compleat Happiness and Glory hereafter ? Or has God no superior Blessings to bestow, and which are more worthy a Candidate for Eternity to be seeking ? What are the Riches of
this

this World, compared with the Riches of the Lord Jesus Christ; the unsearchable Riches of his Wisdom, his Grace and Love, as revealed in his Word, and communicated by his Spirit; and that *incorruptible Inheritance, reserved in Heaven* for all his true Followers?—What are the highest Honours Men can arrive to here, to the *Honour that cometh from God*; of being adopted into his Family, and called *Sons of the Lord Almighty*; and of being made *Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ*? Of whom they shall receive a Crown of everlasting Glory, and reign with him to all Eternity.—And as for the Pleasures of the World, the muddy Delights of Sense, or the more fashionable Entertainments of the Age, are they not lighter than Vanity itself, when put in the Balance with the refined, spiritual, substantial Joys and Delights, which a Believer experiences in the Ways of God here? And these Ways will lead him to *those Pleasures, and that fulness of Joy which are at God's Right-Hand for ever more*: while the Delights and Joys the Sensualist hunts after, are short, momentary, and unsatisfactory; leaving a Damp or a Sting behind the highest Enjoyments of them, and which Death will soon deprive him of.—O blush, my Friend, blush, for the Folly and Want of Understanding which you betray in such a Choice! The Things of a Day preferred to the Things of Eternity!—Where is that Wisdom, that Sagacity and Penetration which you
used

used to discover, when engaged in transacting the Affairs of Life ? O thou World ! thou flattering, deluding Sorcerers ! How hast thou infatuated, deceived, and robbed me of my Friend ! How hast thou seduced him from his true Happiness, his God, his All, to thine Embraces !— And think you, my Friend, you shall ever obtain what you are so eagerly seeking ? And are you resolved to continue the Pursuit, notwithstanding your Plans have been so often defeated, and yourself so often deceived and disappointed, as you must have been ? Or think you to have the World and God together ? They are incompatible. Remember, I pray you what the Scripture saith in this Case,—*The Friendship of the World is Enmity with God ; and if any Man love it, the Love of the Father is not in him.*— Therefore you cannot have them both : To enjoy the one you must let go the other. And will you let go *the Pearl of great Price* ? Will you barter your precious Soul for the Trifles of a Moment ? Are not ten thousand Worlds, purchased at such a Rate, bought too dear ? And can you flatter yourself all will be well with you at last, though you go on in your present Course ? Believe me, you are like one sporting blindfolded upon the Brink of a tremendous Precipice ; one Slip, and you may fall into everlasting Destruction. Perhaps (Conscience being lulled asleep) you are satisfying yourself with the Thoughts, “ that you do not “ wallow in Sin and Sensuality as others do,” or as you did yourself heretofore. Neither do
many

many who never made any Profession of Religion as you have done. But you dare not, Conscience, I know, forbids you to say, that *the Life you at present live in the Flesh, is by the Faith of the Son of God*, and that all you do is to his Glory.

Consider also the INGRATITUDE of the Part you are acting, my dear Friend. To whom are you indebted for that Profusion of Blessings with which you are surrounded? Did not that God, you have so shamefully forgotten and turned your Back upon, create you at first, sustain and provide for you when you knew not how to ask his Help; and by the kind and gentle Hand of his Providence, lead you safely through all the Dangers, Evils, and Deaths, you have been hourly exposed to? Has he not preserved and brought you to this Hour; bestowed freely upon you all the Blessings you have enjoyed; and do you not receive from him at present, *Life, and Breath, and all Things?* And do not his Goodness and Liberality towards you challenge a different Return, at your Hands from what you make him? Think how highly favoured by him we are in respect of national Blessings, in which, as an Individual, you are equally concerned with others. Peace and Plenty are within our Borders, and and smile auspiciously upon our happy Land. The Sword of War, although it was a long Time drawn, yet it was not permitted to work its Devastation amongst us: But *Salvation was appointed for Walls and for Bulwarks* around us.

Our

Our gracious Sovereign, by God's good Providence appointed to reign over us, acts as his Vicegerent here below ; and is the happy Instrument in his Hands of securing to us our Rights and Liberties, both national and personal. No Violence, Oppression, or Persecution, is suffered to lift up its destructive Head amongst us, or disturb our Peace : But *we can lie down and rise up* secure and undisturbed by Fear ; each can *sit under his own Vine and Fig-tree*, and quietly enjoy the Blessings he pours so plentifully down upon us ; while other neighbouring Countries have severely felt the horrid Calamities of a bloody War. But what crowns all these temporal Blessings and gilds them with a resplendent Lustre, is the Light, the blessed, glorious Light of the Gospel of our Salvation, which shines around us in all its meridian Splendor at this Day. Yes, the glad Tidings are published in our Land, *and the Voice of the Turtle is heard therein !—How many Prophets, Kings, and righteous Men, have desired to see and hear those Things which we both see and hear, and have not been indulged their pious Request !—*With what divine Energy is the Word preached, and to how many *is the Arm of the Lord revealed !—*What Plenty of the Means of Grace do we enjoy ! Are not we, my Friend, of the Number of those who have been favoured with extraordinary and peculiar Privileges of this Kind ? Now, to whom much is given, of them much will be required. And will you, in return for these

these Favours, persist to fly from (or rather fly in the Face of) him who thus loadeth you with Benefits, and who still follows you with the Blessings of the everlasting Covenant, offering to bestow them upon you? Shall the Father, in tender Pity and Compassion towards lost Mankind, send his Son into the World to die in vain as to you? Shall Jesus Christ lay aside his Glory, and leave his Father's Bosom, to visit our Earth and to tabernacle amongst Mankind, *take upon him the Form of a Servant, endure great Contradiction of Sinners against himself*; and at last *submit to the Death, even the accursed ignominious Death of the Cross*; and you disregard and slight that stupendous Love which led him to do it? And shall the Holy Spirit strive with you, knock at the Door of your Heart, call and invite you, and you not only refuse to hear his gracious Pleadings and Invitations; but strive to quench him? Is this a proper Return for such Favour and Grace, Condescension and Love? O! my Friend, how would you be ashamed of such Ingratitude towards me or any other Friend, who had done you the least kind Office, or conferred the smallest Favour on you? I know your Delicacy in these Points too well to suppose you could be guilty of the like Behaviour. And shall my Friend be tenacious of his Honour, in observing every Punctilio of a refined Friendship, and of shewing every Instance of Gratitude in his Power towards his Fellow-Creatures; and can he be so basely

basely ungrateful, as to be regardless of what Favours he receives from, and unconcerned about what Return he makes to his Almighty Friend and Benefactor, whose Bounty and Liberality he experiences every Moment ? Shall his Conduct speak aloud in the Face of the Sun, and in the Language of Hell.—“ *Depart from me, O*
 “ *God, I desire not the Knowledge* of thee, or *thy*
 “ *Ways.* Thy Blessings I will receive, but
 “ use them to thy Dishonour ; by making them
 “ instrumental to Sin, and subservient to my
 “ Rebellion against thee. As for thy great
 “ great Salvation, O Christ, which cost thee
 “ most cruel and bitter Agonies, yea, thy
 “ Heart’s Blood, I despise it ; the Offers of
 “ thy Mercy I reject, and *trample thy sacred*
 “ *Blood under my Feet* ; thy Heaven, thy Glory,
 “ and eternal Happiness, I am not at all solici-
 “ tous to procure, and care not whether I ever
 “ enjoy them. I am fully satisfied and con-
 “ tented with having this World ; for I enjoy
 “ sweeter Comforts, and more substantial Hap-
 “ piness in the Ways of Sin and Vanity, and in sen-
 “ sual Gratifications, than thou hast to bestow be-
 “ sides. Neither fear I thy Terrors, thy Threaten-
 “ ings and Judgments, denounced against Sin-
 “ ners. The World I am resolved to have,
 “ (if Conscience will but let me enjoy it quietly)
 “ though Hell be my Portion hereafter.”——
 Dost thou not start ! Does not thy Soul shud-
 der and recoil, my Friend, at Language such

as this ! And yet this, this is the plain, the genuine Language of your present Conduct. You would fear, perhaps, and tremble to utter this in Words ; but, believe me, no other Construction can be put upon your general Practice.

Nor is the PRESUMPTION of your present Conduct less.—You well know you have confessed, and, by the Profession you have made, you have openly declared such Behaviour to be exceeding wrong and sinful ; and yet you persist in it. Are you not defying the Almighty's Vengeance, *and running upon the thick Bosses of his Buckler ?* Does not your Conscience (when you suffer it to speak) condemn you, and tell you, *you are treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath ; and heating the Furnace seven Times hotter ?* In a Word, are you not acting contrary to great Light and Knowledge ; and after receiving great Mercies from the Lord ? And what can you expect will be the Consequence of such a Conduct, or what can aggravate your Condemnation more ?—O awake, awake ! rouse from your spiritual Lethargy, your carnal Security, before it be too late. With what prevailing Arguments, what persuasive Language shall I address you ? What Motives shall I urge to excite in you a serious and solicitous Concern for the Safety and Welfare of your Soul !——

Are you aware, Sir, of the imminent DANGER you are in ? Can you look up, without beholding an incensed God, armed with Omnipotence to destroy you ? Can you look backward,

ward, and not see a black Catalogue of Crimes ; of Blessings abused, of Mercies slighted, and Talents unimproved ? Can you look downward, and not discover the Pit opening its Mouth to receive you ; or forward, and not behold Death, with all its horrid Train of Consequences, and an awful Eternity closing the dreadful Scene ?—And are you prepared to meet the worst that may come ? Are you in that very State you would wish to appear before a just and holy God in ? I fear not. Hear what the sacred Oracles say to you in this Case : Listen to the Declarations of the Lord God : And O that you may so hear as to be excited to escape the impending Storm.—He—whose loving Kindness is better than Life ; in whose auspicious Smile the Happiness of Saints and Angels consists ; and from whose tremendous frown Devils and damned Spirits receive all their intolerable Torments ; even he declares,—*If any Man*—after he has made a Profession, assented to the Truth of the Gospel, and in his Judgment approved of the Way of Salvation, which I have appointed ; if such a one—*draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him.* And in the following Scriptures is the dreadful State of Backsliders and Apostates more fully and more alarmingly described : Judge you how near your State borders upon it.—*If he that was once enlightened, has tasted of the heavenly Gift, and was made a Partaker of the Holy Ghost, has tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come.*

come, if he fall away it is impossible to renew him again to Repentance, seeing he crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open Shame.—He that despised Moses's Law died without Mercy, under two or three Witnesses: Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he (professed he) was Sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done Despite unto the Spirit of Grace?—Again, if any Man sin wilfully, after he has received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation which shall devour the Adversaries.—Are not these Scriptures alarming, my Friend? And is it not a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, who is to all out of Christ a consuming Fire? And what Security do you promise yourself in your present Circumstances? When Omnipotence whets his glittering Sword, and his Arm taketh hold on Vengeance; can you elude the Stroke? Can any of those Idols you have set up in Opposition to the living God, and sought Happiness in, deliver you in the Day of his fierce Anger? Is he Almighty, or is he not? If he be, how shall, how can you escape, if you neglect so great Salvation, as is offered you, and fly not to him for Refuge, who alone can inflict or deliver from the Wrath to come? Have you made a League with Death, and are you

sure the Day, the Hour of his coming is far off ; so that you may go on in your Ways, and shall have Time to turn unto the Lord hereafter, a little before you die ? Are not many as young, as strong and healthy as you cut down in a Moment ? Are not sudden Deaths very common ? And how do you know *your Soul* shall not *be required of you this Night* ? Or if this should not be the Case, can you secure yourself from any of the desolating Judgments the Lord sends in the Earth ? If he send War, Pestilence, Plague, Famine, or Earthquake, to scourge an incorrigible guilty Land, are you safe ? And all these Things *are but the Beginnings of Sorrow* : For whatever Judgments he sends upon incorrigible Sinners here ; whatever Desolations are wrought in the Earth, are but the hiding, as it were, of his Power and Vengeance, compared to that Deluge of Wrath that shall be poured down hereafter, when he shall glorify his Justice in the Destruction of all Unbelievers and Backsliders. And if you know not how to escape temporal, much less will you be able to escape eternal Judgments, if you persist in your Backslidings till Death. When the grisly Tyrant shall be sent with a Commission to bring your Soul naked and defenceless before a just and holy God ; how will you lift up your Head before his incensed Majesty ? And think, O think, my Friend, before it be too late, of that awful, that tremendous Day of Account that is

approaching, when the Archangel shall sound the last Trump, to summon all Mankind to *appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, to give an Account of the Deeds done in the Body* : When the great white Throne shall descend, and the Judge of quick and dead, shall appear to be admired in all his Saints, gloriously apparelled for their Coronation Day : When they shall lift up their Heads with Joy, knowing that their full Redemption draweth nigh ; O what tenfold Horror, Distraction, and Despair will then seize upon the Soul of my (once beloved) Friend ! Whither then will you fly, *when the Faces of all Christ's Enemies shall gather blackness ! Will you call on the Rocks and Mountains to fall on you, to hide you from the Face and Wrath of the Lamb ?* — They shall all dissolve and flow down at his Presence. Will you fly to the great Deep, and secure yourself therein ? — The Sea shall boil like a Pot, and be commanded to give up its dead. Will you seek for Shelter in the inmost Caverns of the Earth ? — The Earth and all Things therein shall be burnt up. — Will you hide yourself behind any of the heavenly Bodies ? — They shall all fall from their Orbs : The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and all the elements shall melt with fervent Heat. Or if in your Confusion you should seek for Refuge amongst the Enemies of Christ, and fly down to Hell — Yea, there his Wrath would burn after you, even to the lowest Abyss thereof ; and

that dreadful Sentence, *Go ye cursed, &c.* being passed ; the Mouth would close upon you, and Eternity (which makes a Heaven of Heaven, a Hell of Hell) would securely guard it round ; and from thence there is no Reprieve. How will this Consideration *then* aggravate and give an Edge to every Torment ? Namely, that you had lived in a Land of Gospel-Light, had enjoyed great Privileges, and Plenty of the Means of Grace, that Mercy being offered you, you seemed for a while to accept of it ; and then through Love to the World, and Attachment to the Things of Time and Sense ; you turned Apostate, and proved all your Profession to be but splendid Hypocrisy. And Oh ! how can I bear the Thoughts of an eternal Separation from the Friend I love ! never, never more to behold him !—“ But stop, my Pen, nor dwell my Thoughts upon the shocking Scene. However, I might then acquiesce in the righteous Judgment of God, the Thought at present overwhelms me——

Excuse my Earnestness, my dear Friend ; and impute it to its right Cause, namely, Love to your Soul. Unwilling to see you continue in your present State, and apprehensive of your Danger ; I could not act so unfaithful a Part, as not to admonish you thereof, and apprize you of the Misery that awaits you in another World, if you die in this State, that so you might be excited to use the Means of escaping it.

And are you not alarmed at these Things ?

Will

Will nothing move you ; no Motives prevail with you to turn you back ? Will not Love to your own Soul excite you to return ; or, what I am persuaded was once almost as dear, Love to your Friend, (who is thus importunate with you) and Regard to his Peace of Mind ? Has Love to your Country no Weight with you ; but will you still add to the ponderous Load of Guilt that is calling aloud for Vengeance ? Nor Love to the Church of God, who are already in Danger of losing their Privileges, for their Unfruitfulness and Non-Improvement of them : and will you, by persisting in your Backslidings do all in your Power to provoke the Lord *to remove his Candlestick* entirely from amongst us ? Will none of these Considerations prompt you to return ?—Turn then your Eyes to Mount *Calvary* ; look at the Cross of Christ ; see, *if ever Sorrow was like unto his Sorrow*, or Love like unto that Love, which led him to suffer the painful, lingering, agonizing, accursed Death of the Cross, with all the horrid, aggravating Circumstances that attended it ! And for whom did he suffer this ?—Why, for Sinners, for such vile, rebellious Sinners as we are : “ Even for the foulest of the Foul he dies ! ” who, notwithstanding my Friend’s foul Revolt, grievous Backsliding, and ungrateful Rebellion, still, still invites you to come unto him, and to partake of his promised Rest. O amazing Mercy ! unparalleled Love ! still stands with open Arms to receive the wander-

ing Prodigal upon his Return ! *Here is Love stronger than Death !* If Terrors cannot alarm, nor a Desire of Safety and Happiness excite you to return ; has Love like this no Charms to constrain you to him ? Can you withstand the Force of such almighty, such transcendent, boundless Love ?——

Does not my Friend begin already to relent ? Is not his Heart softened with the View of this Love ; and melted down into Contrition, for his having so abused it, and slighted the Author of it ? Or, beginning to awake from his Lethargy, does he stand amazed and speechless ? Or, excluding the Dawn of Hope that would gleam upon his Soul, does he cry out in the Language of Unbelief,——“ Who is this that “ would delude me thus, by persuading me “ there is Mercy yet for me ? ”——’Tis no Delusion, no Falshood, but the Voice of triumphant Love ! ’Tis I, your Friend, authorized by the Word of God, that dare assert there is Mercy yet for you ; if you find it in your Heart to return unto the Lord. Would to God you were half as ready to receive it as he is to bestow it upon all that trust in him.

Remember, my Friend, the Day of Grace still lasts ; and you are yet within the Reach of Mercy. If, therefore any thing I have mentioned has made you in the least sensible of the dangerous State you are in, and has been the Means of exciting in you the least Desire to return (and whither can you turn your Eyes,
your

your Ears, your Thoughts, but every Thing repeats the Word, RETURN ?) keep not at a Distance through any Pretence of your Unworthiness, arising from the Number or Greatness of your Crimes, presumptuous and aggravated as they are : Duly sensible of, and deeply humbled for them I would have you to be ; but not to despair nor to delay to go to *the Fountain that is opened for Sin and for Uncleanness*. Try the Virtue of that Blood, *it cleanseth from all Sins : it makes Crimson, Scarlet Sins as white as Snow or as Wool*. And doubt not the Willingness of him that shed it to apply it ; he is always offering in his Word, therein tendering his Grace and Love to poor Sinners : Yea, he
 “ *waits to be gracious : Behold,* says he, *I stand*
 “ *at the Door and knock* (he knocks at Sinners
 “ *Hearts by his Providences, Ministers, Word,*
 “ *and Spirit)* *and if any Man hear my Voice,*
 “ *he adds, and open the Door, I will come in*
 “ *to him, and sup with him, and he with me.*”

Be not discouraged then from returning by the Remembrance of your Unfaithfulness to him, even after the most solemn Engagements and Dedication of yourself to him ; for he keepeth Covenant and Mercy for ever : He is a *God that changeth not, and therefore it is we are not consumed*. He is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever. The Covenant which he has made shall never be forgotten by him ; it is ordered in all Things, and sure. When his professing People backslide and wander from him ; hear
 how

how he condescends to expostulate with them, and to invite them to return. *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways ; for why will ye die, O House of Israel ?* If they have continued for a long Time in their evil Ways, yet he calls unto them still to return, with Promises of Mercy.—*Though thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, and hast wearied me with thine Iniquities ; though thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers ; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for my own Name's Sake, and will not remember thy Sins : Only acknowledge thine Iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast not obeyed his Voice ; and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you : For I am merciful, saith the Lord ; and will not keep Anger for ever.* And when his People are bent to backsliding from him, and seem almost to have wearied his Patience and Long-suffering out ; hear his Reluctance still to give them up to the Destruction they deserve, and his gracious Determination not to destroy them : Thus he utters his soft, his tender, pathetic Compassions over them.—*How shall I give thee up Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together ; I will not execute the Fierceness of mine Anger ; I will not return to destroy thee : for I am God and not Man.—Therefore if thou wilt*
return,

return, return unto me, saith the Lord. I will heal thy Backsliding, I will love thee freely.

And to whom, my Friend, should we go, when Iniquities prevail against us, and Guilt lies heavy upon the Conscience? Where can we go for Deliverance; but unto this God, who is so rich in Mercy to all that call upon him; who thus condescends to expostulate with us; who calls, who invites, who presses us to come unto him that we may be happy, and be saved with an everlasting Salvation: Even to Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God; who alone hath the Words of eternal Life; and whose Blood alone cleanseth from all Sin. One Word from him, applied by his Spirit, is sufficient to remove the ponderous Load of Guilt, to dispel all the Clouds of Darkness that envelope a Soul, and to diffuse throughout it Life, and Peace, and Joy. And do you not long to hear his gracious Voice speaking Peace to you? Stand not out then against his Invitations; nor entertain any disparaging Thoughts either of his Ability or Willingness to save. He is Almighty, and can do all Things. Can he who spake the World into being, and who still upholds it by the Word of his Power; can he want Strength or Ability to effect any Thing he undertakes?—And what induced him to undertake the Salvation of Sinners? Was it any Thing but Love? Did he not find the first moving Cause in himself? Was it not Love induced him to bow the Hea-

vens and come down, and to perform the arduous Task? And having finished it upon the Cross, Law and Justice being satisfied, gave him a Release; and he rose a glorious Conqueror from the Grave, and ascended triumphantly up to Glory, leading Captivity Captive; and having all Power in Heaven and Earth committed unto him, he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. And think you his Arm is now shortened that it cannot save, or that he has forgotten to be gracious? O, no, he is still as able to save as ever he was; and gracious, merciful, long-suffering, are some of the Characters by which he has revealed himself to us: Yea, with him there is Mercy and plenteous Redemption. All Fulness is treasured up in him; so that whatever our Wants are, there is a Sufficiency in him to supply them. The Throne of Grace is free; to which we are exhorted to come boldly, in Confidence of being heard; having there a great High Priest, who ever liveth to make Intercession for poor Sinners: He pleads his Blood before his Father's Throne; and what he asks for any poor Soul, the Father cannot deny it him. He is a compassionate High Priest too, is touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, and commiserates the Ignorant and them that are out of the Way. Look then, my Friend, to this exalted Redeemer, who has recovering and restoring Grace to bestow; which is usually dispensed in a Way of Chastisement, by his sending some alarming Visitation, to rouse the secure and careless

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less Backslider to a Sense of his Ways, and the dangerous State he is in : But he condescends to deal so graciously with you, as to call you back by a Series of Favours and Blessings. O let a Sense of *his Goodness* then lead you to *Repentance*, and let Gratitude excite you to praise him for his Patience, Longsuffering, and Forbearance exercised towards you ; in that he has not permitted Satan to sift you like Wheat : May you hear his mild, his gentle, heavenly Voice, and obey it ; least you provoke him to speak to you in Thunder : And now, while *he draws you with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*, may you readily and gladly run after him.

Though I have far exceeded the Bounds of a Letter, and what I at first intended to write ; yet bear with me a little longer, while I just put you in Remembrance of some few Things (for you once knew them) which may be of Use to you.—And, first, I would remind you that the whole Work of Salvation is Jesus Christ's ; that his Power alone can effect it in any Soul ; that you can do nothing of yourself. Is your Heart harder than the nether Millstone ? He can soften it, though harder than the Adamant. He turns the hard Rock into a standing Water, and the Flint Stone into a springing Well : He will, if you come to him, give you an Heart of Flesh, made susceptible of every sanctifying Impression of his Holy Spirit : He will subdue those rebellious

lions Lusts that have led you away Captive from him ; and will put his Fear within you, that you may no more depart from him : He will teach you and instruct you in the Way you should go, and guide you with his Eye : He will make his Ways pleasant to you ; cause you to run in them and not be weary, to walk therein without being faint. Yet for all these Things will he be enquired of to do them for you. Therefore let me,

In the second Place, remind you of the Necessity of a diligent Attendance on all the Ordinances of God's House. Wait on him for Grace in the Means of his own Appointment, both publick and private. Embrace the golden Seasons while they last : Catch the favourable Opportunities : For he never said to the Sons of Jacob, " Seek ye me in vain." Plead with him, earnestly plead with him at the Throne of Grace : Wrestle with him in Prayer for the Blessings you are sensible you want : Fill your Mouth with Arguments ; put him in Mind of his tender Mercies and his Covenant, urge his Truth and Faithfulness to his Word and Promises : Pray particularly to be delivered from a worldly-minded Spirit, which is the very Bane of the Life and Power of Godliness in the Heart.

I would therefore remind you, in the next Place, how useful and necessary a close Examination into, and a strict Watchfulness over your own Heart is ; that upon a Discovery of its

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Corruptions you may be enabled to live by Faith upon the Righteousness of Christ for Pardon, and upon the Strength of Christ for continual Victory over them, so shall *no Root of Bitterness spring up and trouble you*. Sin is of such a fruitful, increasing Nature, that unless its first Stirrings and Appearance be checked, it will soon grow to a great Height. The Cloud that appears at first but as a Man's Hand, may soon overspread and darken the whole Heavens: And a River that has its Beginning from a small Fountain, may so increase as to overflow its Banks; therefore watch and pray.

And lastly, I would advise you to beg of God to make you, and to keep you low in your own Eyes, and to maintain in you a humbling Sense of your own Vileness and Unworthiness; That, being always diffident of your own Strength, you may *be strong in the Lord*, and from henceforth walk safely. Prize the Righteousness of Christ as your only sure Ground of Hope, and Foundation of future Happiness. Esteem his Intercession and Merits as what must perfume all your imperfect Services, and render them acceptable to the *Father*. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit*; but seek fresh Sealings from him every Day. Thus may you become (notwithstanding you have so greatly fallen and highly dishonoured God) *a shining Light* in your Day and Generation. And it is my earnest Prayer, that God may deeply impress at all Times the Weight and Importance of the Things I have
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mentioned upon my own Mind as well as yours, my Friend ; and that he will enable me to put in Practice the Advice I have given you : Then shall we *grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, shall walk in the Light of his Countenance*, and glorify his Name upon Earth ; and thereby be trained up and made meet for the glorious Mansions of eternal Bliss above : Where all who enter shall *be made Pillars to go out no more* ; will there do the Will of God perfectly ; and drink of those Pleasures which are at his Right-Hand for evermore.

To which blessed Place that our gracious redeeming God may bring us both, with all our Acquaintances and Friends, to *join the general Assembly of the First-born, whose Names are written in Heaven* ; is, and shall be the constant and fervent Prayer of,

Dear Sir, 50059

Your very affectionate Friend,

and Wellwisher, &c. &c.

F I N I S.